



## **Updated Procedures for State and Local LEOs Flying Armed**

On November 15, 2008 the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) will begin transition to a National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS) message for State and local law enforcement officers (LEOs) flying armed. The NLETS message sent by the employing agency will be in addition to the current Original Letter of Authority, signed by the Chief or agency head, required under 49 CFR § 1544.219. This change is being implemented to provide a more secure means of confirming the identity of LEOs.

Once the NLETS message is received by TSA, a return NLETS message will be sent to the employing agency with a Unique Alphanumeric Identifier for verification at the airport on the day of travel.

Failure to use the NLETS message in addition to the Original Letter of Authority may result in delays due to the additional verification requirements during the transition period. After the transition period the use of the Nlets message, in lieu of the letter, will become mandatory.

# STATE AND LOCAL LEOS FLYING ARMED

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What are the requirements for a State or local Law Enforcement Officer to fly armed?**

The Requirements for a LEO to fly armed aboard commercial aircraft are outlined in 49 CFR § 1544.219 *Carriage of Accessible Weapons*. The complete text of this section can be found on-line at the Government Printing Office web site at:

<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/>.

Unless otherwise authorized by TSA, to fly armed a LEO must;

- Be a Federal law enforcement officer or a full-time municipal, county, or state law enforcement officer who is a direct employee of a government agency.
- Be sworn and commissioned to enforce criminal statutes or immigration statutes.
- Be authorized by the employing agency to have the weapon in connection with assigned duties.
- Completed the training program “Law Enforcement Officers Flying Armed.”

### **What are the procedures for a State or local Law Enforcement Officer to fly armed?**

1. Have the operational need to fly armed.
2. The LEO’s employing agency transmits a properly formatted message, via Nlets.
3. An Nlets receipt, with Unique Alphanumeric Identifier, is transmitted from the Transportation Security Operations Center (TSOC) to the LEO’s employing agency.
4. On the day of travel the LEO checks-in with the airline ticket counter, identifies his/herself and presents the Original Letter of Authority from his/her Chief or Agency Head. The LEO fills out the armed traveler paperwork provided by the airline and proceeds to the Armed LEO Screening Checkpoint.
5. At the Armed LEO Screening Checkpoint the LEO provides the Unique Alphanumeric Identifier from the Nlets message and displays his/her badge, credentials, boarding pass, a second form of government identification, and required airline paperwork, commonly referred to as Person Carrying Firearms (PCFA) forms.
6. The LEO will complete the LEO Logbook and proceed to his/her boarding gate.
7. At the boarding gate the LEO will provide the airlines armed traveler paperwork and inform the gate agent of his/her presence and status.
8. The LEO then meets with the Pilot in Command, Federal Air Marshals, Federal Flight Deck Officers, and/or other Law Enforcement Officers onboard the flight as directed.

**When should the Nlets message regarding armed State or local LEO travel be submitted?**

It is recommended that agencies transmit the Nlets message a minimum of 24 hours prior to travel to ensure routing of the information prior to day of travel.

**What if a LEO has not submitted an Nlets message but does have the Original Letter of Authority from his Chief or Agency Head?**

The designated LEO checkpoint personnel will ask the LEO to contact his/her employing agency and have an immediate Nlets request transmitted. If the Nlets message Unique Alphanumeric Identifier cannot be provided, additional verification steps will be required which may cause delays.

After the period of transition, use of the Nlets message will become mandatory.

**What happens if a LEO advises that his/her employing agency sent an Nlets message but does not know the Unique Alphanumeric Identifier?**

The LEO will be asked to contact his/her employing agency to obtain the Unique Alphanumeric Identifier.

If unable to contact his/her employing agency, verification using the Original Letter of Authority is authorized during the transition period; however, a delay may occur due to the additional verification steps.

After the transition period the Original Letter of Authority will no longer be accepted.

**What happens if a LEO has the Nlets alphanumeric ID number without a signed letter of authority from his/her chief?**

During the transition period the Original Letter of Authority remains a regulatory requirement and will be required at check-in by the air carrier.

**Does the Nlets message replace the requirement to notify the Air Carrier of the LEO's intent to fly armed or complete the required paperwork?**

No. LEOs with an operational need to travel armed must present acceptable credentials as outlined in 49 CFR § 1544.219 to the Air Carrier. In addition, LEO's must present an Original Letter of Authority and complete any required airline paperwork, commonly referred to as Person Carrying Firearm forms (PCFA).

**What is the three letter airport code that is required in the Nlets message and where can I find these codes?**

The airport code is a three letter designator for a commercial airport. These are the codes that airlines and pilots use to identify airports and are used in timetables, baggage tags, tickets, advertisements, airline and global reservation systems. There are approximately 9000 codes currently in use.

The three letter airport code can be found on the airlines website, on travel itineraries, or by searching the internet.

The below link will redirect you to the Federal Aviation Administration's page where searches for three letter airport codes can be made.

<http://www.faa.gov/library/glossaries/>

**What if a LEO experiences an unexpected itinerary change (weather, delays, re-routing)?**

If the change(s) do not affect the Date of Travel, the existing Nlets message will be accepted as long as the LEO is traveling through the same airports.

If the Date of Travel or airport information changes, a new Nlets message will be required.

**What information should be entered into the EIT (Escorted Individual Type), EIN (Escorted Individual Name), or CAP (Connecting Airport) fields if a LEO is not escorting a dignitary/transporting a prisoner or traveling through a connecting airport?**

The EIT, EIN and CAP fields, if not applicable, may be omitted from the message.